



COMMISSION ON CHILD CARE

December 23, 2019

The Honorable Sidney Katz
President, Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

President Katz and Members of the County Council:

The Commission on Child Care (CCC) advises the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of government policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable and accessible child care. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the Council around areas of critical importance to the lives of Montgomery County's youngest residents and their families.

Through this letter, the CCC would like to urge Montgomery County to restore the county's previous professional development funding that allowed the Montgomery County early childhood workforce to further their education and credentials. This funding is critical to the County's overall efforts to prepare a qualified and effective workforce and raise levels of school readiness for thousands of children most in need throughout our county.

Montgomery County child care providers are currently facing a workforce crisis. There are not enough qualified teachers applying for and taking positions in child care programs. The child care community is losing staff to Montgomery County Public Schools as they have lowered their qualifications for paraeducators. A shortage of workforce can reduce availability of care for Montgomery County families, many of whom are struggling to maintain or achieve middle class status, as providers struggle to maintain teacher-child ratios mandated by the State.

Previous to the funding cut, this allocation of \$110,000 created an opportunity for over 68 providers to participate in continuing education through Montgomery College's (MC) early childhood degree program. In recent years, MC has provided guidance for students currently in the workforce to apply for state funds; however, those funds have also been cut (not eliminated- but significantly reduced to 6 credits per year).

Department of Health and Human Services

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We implore the Council to acknowledge the importance of addressing the education of early childhood professionals. ***We believe that the current workforce shortage creates urgency for the Council to act now to restore funding for early childhood professional development services in Montgomery County.*** The Commission asks that the County restore Professional Development funding, administered through the Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (MCCCRRC) to \$200,000 for the next fiscal year.

Thank you for your time, service and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Belski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michelle Belski
Chair

c: Marc Elrich, County Executive